

within the physician's reference. As told, the story merely relates a case of murder, not of mercy killing. Murder is not a physician's business.

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Book Review

The Western Journal of Medicine does not review all books sent by publishers, although information about new books received is printed elsewhere in the journal as space permits. Prices quoted are those given by the publishers.

Community-Oriented Primary Care: From Principle to Practice

Edited by Paul A. Nutting, MD. US Department of Health and Human Services, Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, 1987. 539 pages, \$16 (paperback).

At the time this book was written, Dr Nutting, the editor, was the Director of the Office of Primary Care Studies within the Health Resources and Service Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services. From this office, he was able to stimulate conferences, discussions, and papers regarding how primary care health services could be better directed toward the health needs of the communities that they serve. This book is essentially an anthology of short articles regarding how the concepts of epidemiology or community medicine can be incorporated into the practice of primary care medicine.

Community-oriented primary care is defined by the editor and several of the authors in this book as a synthesis of the traditional practice of primary care medicine with the disciplines of public health, community medicine, or epidemiology. It is an exciting and logical expansion of the primary care movement that has occurred within the United States during the past 20 years. The resurgence and the interest nationally in the development of family medicine, general internal medicine, and general pediatrics is evidenced by the growth in the number of residency training programs and the continued demand for primary care physicians in the face of a perceived oversupply of physicians in general. These primary care disciplines have all had a voiced interest in preventive medicine and community medicine but have generally lacked the skills necessary to apply these principles to their primary care practices. Although admittedly in its infancy stage, the community-oriented primary care movement within the US offers not only an orientation to community health problems but some methodologies for inclusion into the practice of primary care medicine.

The book is honest in its description of the problems related to expanding primary care into a community orientation—such problems as our current reimbursement system for health services, the difficulty of defining the community of service, and the denominator of this service population to be studied. It also presents a number of concrete examples of how community-oriented primary care has been successfully incorporated into various practice settings, including the private practice office, group and health maintenance organization practices, and more traditional public health services. Many of the articles describe methodology that would be very helpful to the practitioner considering trying out community health studies, even on a small scale.

Perhaps most important for the practicing physician is an understanding of the limitations presented by the traditional individual care model that typifies most of primary care medicine. This book offers the opportunity to expand the horizons of practice challenges, including understanding the practice population, being able to identify particular health problems within the population served, and supplies mechanisms of evaluating whether interventions by a physician are of any value.

As might be expected from such a compilation of individual articles involving some 76 different authors, the quality of the work is somewhat variable. Dr Nutting does an excellent job, however, in organizing the articles into a logical and helpful progression of understanding community-oriented primary care, the tools necessary for implementing it, some examples of successful programs, and a discussion on the problems of evaluation of such efforts. There are several excellent chapters toward the end, including a wonderful one on the data resources available from the federal government and an annotated bibliography.

I think this book should be a must reading for any primary care physician. Whether or not the physician chooses to attempt any community-oriented primary care activities in his or her practice, the understanding of the concept and how it is being developed across the country would be exceedingly valuable to the practitioner. It is generally well-written, easy to read, and lends itself to selected reading of those chapters or articles that may be of particular interest. I strongly recommend this book.

ROBERT C. DAVIDSON, MD, MPH
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Family Practice
University of California, Davis,
School of Medicine